

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 17, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

As Congress begins seeking a consensus on ideas for stimulating the U.S. economy, we ask that you include funding which invests in our nation's community health centers and health professions training programs. Areas reliant on community health centers and facing serious provider shortages are affected first and hardest in an economic downturn, and have growing unmet infrastructure and educational needs, which diminish their capacity to serve main street America.

The health information technology investment that President-Elect Barack Obama has recommended will surely improve our health care system, yet an immediate injection of additional health care facility funding will also support Americans as they seek primary health care services and job training opportunities in these tough economic times. In addition, these construction dollars will immediately create jobs and serve as a sustainable economic driver by creating a lasting health infrastructure investment. This is especially true in rural areas where the provision of health services is often the foundation of a strong economy.


Inclusion of this infrastructure funding in the economic stimulus package is mission critical in helping strengthen our community health center safety net while generating increased educational capacity at the institutions we rely on to deliver frontline health professionals into areas of need. Such an investment in these "shovel-ready" projects will not only have an immediate job creation impact in local economies and open up new career opportunities for displaced workers, it will also save valuable health care dollars by improving access to care.

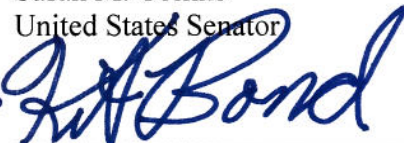
As Congress works to restore our nation's economy, we ask that this must-do investment be part of the stimulus package and look forward to working with you to ensure its inclusion.

Sincerely,


E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator


Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

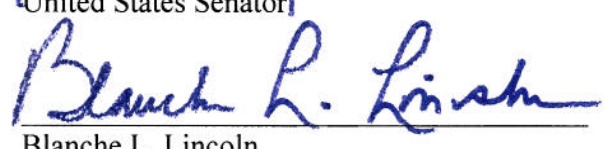

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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator